

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 AGR-05 AGRE-00 AID-05 CEA-01

CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01

SP-02 STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04 SIL-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 SS-15

NSC-05 L-03 ITC-01 /092 W
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R 221500Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5239

INFO ALL EC CAPS 189

USDEL MTN GENEVA

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 27709

DEPT PASS AGRICULTURE AND STR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: FR, ETRD, PINT, PFOR

SUBJ: AMBASSADORS CALL ON PRIME MINISTER BARRE

BEGIN SUMMARY. MY FIRST CALL ON PRIME MINISTER BARRE
WAS CHARACTERIZED BY AN EXTREMELY FRIENDLY AND CORDIAL
WELCOME. BARRE USED THE OCCASION, HOWEVER, TO
CHALLENGE THE CURRENT USG PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE
DUTY ON FRENCH COGNAC, NOTING THAT THE SEVERE DROUGHT
IN FRANCE THIS PAST SUMMER MEANS THAT FRENCH IMPORTS OF
U.S. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS WILL RISE, THUS MAKING A U.S.
INCREASE OF ITS DUTY ON FRENCH COGNAC PARTICULARLY
GALLING. HE ALSO SPOKE IN FAVOR OF DISCUSSION OF BASIC
AGRICULTURAL POLICY ISSUES IN BROAD INTERNATIONAL
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FORUM BUT QUESTIONED WHETHER AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY

COULD BE DISCUSSED IN SAME CONTEXT. END SUMMARY

1. IN MY FIRST CALL ON RAYMOND BARRE IN HIS NEW ROLE AS PRIME MINISTER, I RECEIVED A CORDIAL WELCOME DURING AN HOUR'S CONVERSATION IN WHICH BARRE INSISTED THAT HE HOPED TO SEE ME OFTEN, AND EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH ON FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS, WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS IN EXCELLENT SHAPE.

2. BARRE OBSERVED THAT THE USG AND GOF HAVE BOTH ADJUSTED TO THE REALITIES OF THEIR SITUATIONS. A GOOD DIALOGUE HAS DEVELOPED. HE STRESSED THAT THE THOUGHT THIS DIALOGUE AND OUR RELATIONSHIP SHOULD FOCUS ON BROAD POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AND THAT WE SHOULD AVOID LETTING SMALL THINGS POISON THE ATMOSPHERE.

3. HE CITED THE RECENT U.S. MOVE TO INCREASE THE DUTY ON COGNAC AS ONE SUCH ADVERSE DEVELOPMENT, NOTING THAT THE GOF IS FINDING IT MOST DIFFICULT TO CHANGE ITS OWN HEALTH REGULATIONS FORBIDDING THE SALE TO THE FRENCH PUBLIC OF POULTRY FED WITH COMPOUNDS WHICH INCLUDE ARSENICALS, AND JUST AS DIFFICULT TO PERSUADE THE EEC TO CHANGE ITS REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING THE SALE OF U.S. POULTRY IN THE COMMON MARKET AREA. HE ADDED THAT THE SEVERE DROUGHT IN FRANCE THIS SUMMER MEANS THERE WILL BE AN INCREASE IN FRENCH IMPORTS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS FROM THE U.S. AND THIS MAKES IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND THE USG'S PICKING THIS PARTICULAR MOMENT TO INCREASE THE DUTY ON FRENCH COGNAC. I SAID WE RECOGNIZED THAT THIS WAS A VERY SENSITIVE PROBLEM, BOTH IN FRANCE AND IN THE U.S., AND ADDED THAT WE WERE CONTINUING TO WORK CLOSELY WITH OUR FRENCH OPPOSITE NUMBERS IN SEEKING A MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY RESOLUTION OF THIS PROBLEM.

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4. I CITED CONCORDE AS AN EXAMPLE OF A SITUATION IN WHICH INITIAL FRENCH AND U.S. POSITIONS SEEMED FAR APART, BUT OVER THE MONTHS OUR CONTINUING DIALOGUE BROUGHT TO EACH SIDE A MUCH BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE OTHER'S POINT OF VIEW AND CONCERNS.

5. I MENTIONED THAT THE USG AND GOF, AS TWO OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST EXPORTERS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, HAVE A COMMON INTEREST IN ENCOURAGING TRADE LIBERALIZATION WITH RESPECT TO SUCH PRODUCTS.

6. BARRE AGREED. HE ADDED THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE BASIC POLICY ISSUES CONCERNING AGRICULTURE DISCUSSED IN A BROAD INTERNATIONAL FORUM, BUT HE FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO TRY TO DISCUSS AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY IN THE SAME CONTEXT, JUST AS HE THOUGHT IT INAPPROPRIATE TO TRY TO CONFIDENTIAL

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DISCUSS INTERNATIONALLY THE DETAILS OF MARKETING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS. HE ADDED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD STOP TALKING ABOUT DOING AWAY WITH THE CAP.

7. THROUGHOUT OUR CONVERSATION, BARRE WAS EXTREMELY FRIENDLY. HE INSISTED THAT WE MUST RECOGNIZE OUR INTERDEPENDENCE AND THAT WE MUST WORK TOGETHER IN OUR MUTUAL BEST INTEREST.

8. COMMENT:

(A) I WAS PLEASED BY BARRE'S APPROACH TO OUR RELATIONSHIP. UNLIKE HIS PREDECESSOR, WHO SOUGHT TO BOLSTER GAULLIST NATIONALISM IN EVERY DIPLOMATIC

CONTACT, BARRE WANTS TO FOLLOW THE PRAGMATIC, NO-POLEMICAL LINE SET BY GISCARD. I FEEL CONFIDENT WE CAN COUNT ON BARRE TO GIVE US A FRIENDLY HEARING AND CONTINUED ACCESS ON MAJOR PROBLEMS, ESPECIALLY IN FOREIGN ECONOMIC AREA.

(B) THE REMARKS VOLUNTEERED BY BARRE ON COGNAC SUGGEST THAT THE FRENCH DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES ON BARRE MAY BE MOUNTING. (WE HAD EARLIER RECEIVED WORD THAT COGNAC WAS ONE DOSSIER WHICH BARRE DID NOT RPT NOT WISH TO RETAIN.) WE WILL CONTINUE PRESSING THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE FOR FURTHER POSITIVE RESPONSES, ALONG THE LINES OF THOSE THEY HAVE ALREADY MADE.

(C) BARRE'S ADVICE ON THE CAP, APART FROM BEING INACCURATE (AS HE WELL KNOWS), REFLECTS THE FRENCH HYPERSENSITIVITY TO PUBLIC COMMENTS BY USG OFFICIALS CRITICIZING THE FRENCH AND CAP (SEE, E.G., PARIS 27426, NOTAL).

(D) HIS COMMENTS ON AGRICULTURE REITERATE THE HARD FRENCH LINE WE HAVE OFTEN HEARD BEFORE, BUT ALSO SUGGEST THAT WE MIGHT MAKE SOME PROGRESS IN THE MTN VIS-A-VIS THE FRENCH IF WE WERE TO COUCH OUR PROPOSALS MORE IN TERMS OF BROAD POLICY INTERESTS AND LESS IN WHAT STRIKE THE FRENCH AS DIRECT AND GRATUITOUS ATTACKS ON THE CAP.

(E) IN ADDITION TO THESE TRADE CONSIDERATIONS, I WANT TO STRESS HOW SENSITIVE THE SUBJECT OF AGRICULTURE HAS BECOME IN FRANCE TODAY BECAUSE OF THE EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT. IN MY OPINION, INCREASING THE DUTY ON
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FRENCH COGNAC AT THIS TIME WOULD BE ILL ADVISED AND WOULD HAVE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE RESULTS.
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